



United Church of Gainesville

LATE JANUARY 2011

Larry Reimer & Sandy Reimer
Ministers

NEWSLETTER

WHOEVER YOU ARE, WHEREVER YOU ARE ON LIFE'S JOURNEY, WE WELCOME YOU.

Andy Bachmann
Associate Minister
Vince Amlin
Associate Minister
Lisa Goldstein
Editor

WORSHIP THEME:

“Turning Points: Moments When the Concept of Justice Changed”

One of the fascinating things about the AMC TV period piece, “Mad Men” is seeing how radically our ideas of justice have changed since the year 1960. Look at how women, people of color, gays and lesbians are routinely treated on that program. Or there’s environmental justice. In one scene, the Draper family goes on a picnic on a beautiful Sunday afternoon. When they finish they pick up the cloth they have set for lunch, shake off all their paper goods and extra food right on the park lawn and walk away! I remember those days.

Our new theme explores “Turning Points – When Concepts of Justice Change”, by looking at specific times in our lives as ministers and members of UCG when the concept of justice changed and how that impacted our faith .

CALL TO WINTER CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Sunday, January 30 at 10:35am in the Sanctuary

Child care & chocolate provided

Agenda: Discuss and approve the final 2011 budget.



OF INTEREST

- ◆ Adult Small Group registration - see pg. 2
- ◆ Lively Arts Party– Saturday January 15. All welcome - see page 2
- ◆ Sunday Morning Coffee Procedures for 2011 - see page 3
- ◆ Pledge Update - see page 5
- ◆ IHN Hosting begins January 30 - sign up to help between services in January

The word *January* comes from *Janus*, the mythological god who faces in two directions. We also in the new year are left to look both ways, to straddle both past and future, the known and the unknown. All we know for now is that something of time and opportunity passes through the riverbed of our minds, drawing us into the wider currents of a year and leaving us to a calendar of days that stretch out before us in a succession of beginnings – new each morning. ~ *Marv Hiles, An Almanac for the Soul*

What's Happening in January and beyond...

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The Adult Small Group registration continues through Sunday, January 30. After registration closes, an email will be sent to group participants confirming that they are enrolled; then group leaders will contact participants directly before the event. UCG members and regular visitors have first preference for groups with limited participation. For more information, contact Vince Amlin at vincea@ucgainesville.org.

Kathy Funke and Michael Pellett are hosting the annual Post Lessons and Carols Party in their home, 3631 NW 23rd Place, on Saturday, January 15 at 6:30pm. Please bring a covered dish or beverage to share. This is open to anyone who has sung in the choir, played an instrument, sung from the hymnal, or heard music during a UCG worship service.

20 and 30-Somethings, Save This Date! - On January 21 at 7pm, Vince Amlin and Heather Remer will host a get together for UCG members and visitors in their 20's and 30's to get to know one another and plan some events for the upcoming year. Please plan to join us; details to come!

Volunteers needed for our next IHN hosting January 30 – February 6. It takes many hands to make this a light ministry. Please consider helping out! Sign-ups will take place between services in January.

Please note that the 2011 Mardi Gras Adult Winter party has been re-scheduled to Saturday February 19, 2011. We can still use planning, coordinating and support help. Contact Doug Kiker (dpkiker@gmail.com) or Vince (vincea@ucgainesville.org) to join in!

Brush up Your Dancing Skills for the Winter Party! - In preparation for UCG's Winter Party, come learn to dance like a star! Taught by U.S. Open Champion, Dr. Caroline (Kay) Picart with Jerry Rivera, this class will focus on the basics in Latin/rhythm and ballroom. Dates: January 22 at 4-5 p.m.; January 29 at 11 a.m.-12 noon. Price: \$20 per person for both sessions. Partners preferred but not required. Register with Patricia Gregory at nutricia@cox.net or phone 377-6762.

January Youth Happenings

MSG

January 16th is the special time and special gathering for our Bullying seminar (see info below) There will be no 11 am meeting!

January 23rd we will Walk and Talk about issues of Justice that we see in our world and experience in our lives. Please come prepared with a few extra bucks for hot chocolate! Then, following the themes that come up, on **January 30th and February 6th** we will be having a "Mock Trial" to explore these issues of Justice more fully. This promises to be an engaging three week them in MSG!

Youth United

On Sunday, January 16th we are going to have a combined MSG/YU event sponsored by Caroline Chance, a UF student in Counseling and a UCGer! Caroline is going to have a seminar on and around the topic of bullying in middle school and high school. It is called "The Bully, The Bullied and The Bystander." This will take place starting at **12 noon and will go until 1:30 pm.** We invite any and all MSG and High School aged students to attend this special event. Lunch will be provided.

On **February 6** we will have our 8th annual Progressive Dinner! **Meet at UCG at 5 pm**, and join us as we travel to two homes around town, followed by a dessert extravaganza at UCG.

Other Church News

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Life (and Death) Happen While We are Making Other Plans – a follow-up from Sandy regarding her sermon topic from September 12: Recently, an active UCG member died suddenly and unexpectedly. The ministerial staff learned of this death through another UCG member who received an e-mail from the management of the condo complex where she and this person both lived. We had no contact information at the church for this person's family. For over 24 hours, we four ministers knew of this person's death but could not respond to the family in any way nor could we make any plans for a memorial service. It was only through Google that we were able to track down someone who knew how to locate this person's son.

As your ministers, we do not want this to happen again. We need your help. We have a simple form, "*Information in the Event of My Death*," that you can fill out which includes the phone numbers and addresses of your relatives and/or close friends. We file these forms in the church office, so that we have this information immediately available if it is needed. Please pick up a form in the foyer on Sunday. Or e-mail Alyson and she'll send a form to you which you can fill out electronically and send back to us. Or use the website to download a form, fill it out and send/bring it to the church office.

Whether you are partnered or married or single, whether you are an elder or a mid-lifer, or a young adult, don't assume anything about who will be around to call the church if you should die unexpectedly. Please guarantee that your dear ones are ministered to as you would wish!

PS – We aren't going to leave this alone, so respond now rather than later!

Outreach Update

Thank you to all who supported our numerous Outreach offerings during the month of December. Here is what we accomplished:

- ◆ 200+ gifts were distributed to the 4th and 5th graders at Duval Elementary School and the Shands Children's Medical Services department.
- ◆ 150+ tube socks filled with personal toiletries and snack items were passed out to the homeless.
- ◆ \$2000+ was given to financially challenged individuals, families and organizations through our Christmas Mini-grant program.
- ◆ 50+ volunteers helped host three families that stayed with us through Interfaith Hospitality Network.
- ◆ Christmas parties were hosted for two group homes of developmentally disabled friends at Tachachale.
- ◆ 20+ of our new members served a tasty dinner of lasagna and salad at St. Francis House .
- ◆ 40+ people contributed over 500 hours to provide a bathroom, front and back stoop, roof repair and a new coat of paint for Gloria Walker through the Rebuilding Together organization.
- ◆ 250+ lbs of food was donated to the Gainesville Community Ministries food pantry.
- ◆ \$ 1166 was donated to Ray Meeks., a church member who is on death row.
- ◆ \$ 2725 was given to support the United Church of Gainesville Emergency Loan Fund.

Coffee Time in 2011

Coffee time is an integral part of the Sunday morning experience at UCG. In the past, folks who volunteered to make coffee on their annual "Time and Talent" forms were assigned specific Sundays to prepare coffee. Unfortunately, 2010 brought more than a few Sundays where coffee makers did not show, sadly leaving UCG members with empty cups. In light of this we have decided to move to a sign-up system, asking folks to volunteer to make coffee on a Sunday that is convenient for them. Every 4-6 weeks we will email a sign-up sheet to those who indicated they are willing to make coffee, asking them to sign up for a Sunday and return their choice to the church office via email. A confirmation email will then be sent out as well as a reminder email the week before someone is scheduled to make coffee. As with the previous system, if someone cancels or does not show, there will be no coffee on that Sunday. We do our best to make coffee time enjoyable as well as socially responsible, using Fair Trade coffee, biodegradable cups and real cream. We hope that this new system will eliminate coffee making no-shows. Remember that making coffee on Sunday morning is also great way of increasing your pledge by giving the gift of time. If you are interested in being a coffee volunteer, please contact Lisa Goldstein at lisag@ucgainesville.org.

A Little Child Shall Lead Them

UCG Children's Program

Heidi Stein, Director

How do you talk to children about Slavery?

United Tribes K-5th will have a lesson on the Underground Railroad and on January 16th we will have an all tribe participation event led by Larry and Sandy Reimer where the children will get to re-enact the Underground. I found a nice resource on how to talk with children about slavery. I especially liked this resource as it talked about three things I find very important when addressing this topic (or any social justice topic) with children: starting with a world history of slavery and then narrowing in to US history, presenting things objectively and then supporting the children's moral standings (this really works with my children), and finally using storybooks that tell the stories from a child's perspective. This resource as well as the lessons plans are available on the UCG Website.

Schedule

- 01-09-11** Underground Railroad Lesson
Pre-K Good Samaritan
- 01-16-11** All Tribe Event Underground Railroad
Pre-K MLK
- 01-23-11** Choir Practice
Pre-K Golden Rule
- 01-30-11** Celebrating Cam's Service Tribe Event
Pre-K Feeling Angry



A Note from Cam Parker...

I am extremely grateful to have had the opportunity to serve the families of UCG for over eleven years. I appreciate not only the church for granting me the position (twice), but for the parents and children that have allowed me to have a role in their lives. As if the children were not enough, I have been fortunate to be able to develop a personal relationship with quite a few of the parents, church members and staff that I have worked with. For this I say, "Thank you."

Leaving my position has been something I have been considering for quite some time. Despite being at a church on more Sundays than anyone I know, I rarely get an opportunity to attend a worship service at my own church. Getting married has accentuated my desire to work on my own spiritual growth, to improve as a person and as a husband. I have come to cherish the idea of spending Sunday mornings with my wife and friends at the church we have found together. As UCG has grown and changed, the dynamics of my position have changed as well. These changes combined with my desire to spend my Sunday mornings on my own growth have led me to the decision that now is the time. Please understand that this choice has not come lightly and it is with great sadness and after much soulful deliberation that I have finally taken action. However, I am comforted by my confidence that UCG and its families will send me off with the same support and love that is all I have ever known. For this, and with a tear, I say, "Thank you."

You're invited to a celebration of Cam on January 30th following the Congregational Meeting. Sandy Reimer and I also will be available on Sunday, January 16 at 10:45 in the library to answer questions and share information about the transition in staff.

Boards and Committees

Pledge Remarks from Moderator Tim Martin

How many of you know everybody else in the church? Me neither. One characteristic of a large church is that they are too big and complex for everybody to know everybody else.

UCG has experienced consistent growth over the last 10 years, with annual rates of increase of 3-5%/year over the last few years. We are now over 700 members, and have crossed the threshold into “large church” territory. Research into growing churches reveals several important pitfalls and challenges that face churches of our size:

- ◆ Growth will stagnate if the congregation does not come to terms with its identity as a complex organization where everyone doesn’t know everyone else and not everyone can be cared for by a single pastor
- ◆ Need to create enough programs of excellent quality to attract new members. These churches need to grow smaller as they grow larger.
- ◆ Most importantly for what we’re talking about here, growth becomes related to the capacity of the staff and the capacity of the physical facilities, both of which are largely a function of the size of the budget.

This limitation occurs because at some point, the ability of volunteer lay leadership to run all church programs becomes too much. We have already seen this occur in the past few years as new staff lines have been added for our fiscal and children’s programs and choir leadership. At the same time, the physical infrastructure must be able to handle the increased demands of larger membership. As it stands now, we run out of room most Sundays to house our growing United Tribes and adult program activities.

This fall’s pledge campaign was a success in several ways: we expanded our pledging base, and we finished the main campaign in time to close it down before the Christmas season. However, we ended the campaign \$85,000 short of our goal. The Board of Business has now cut \$20,000 from the budget, reducing the senior pastors’ salary line by \$5,000, the capital expense lines by \$10,000 and adjusting expected income by +\$5,000 to bring the budget to \$577,000 which requires supplemental pledge campaign of \$65,000. Over the next couple of weeks you will be receiving additional information about the supplemental pledge campaign. We’ll need an average increase in pledge of 8% to meet this supplemental goal.

UCG members have always responded rapidly and generously to calls for support for outreach programs. The need to provide the funding for future staffing needs and infrastructure growth is harder to pitch and doesn’t strike our souls the way outreach programs do, but is no less critical for the long term vitality of our church.

As you consider this year’s supplemental pledge program, I encourage you to reflect on the blessings of a growing church that we all enjoy and to give generously so that UCG can continue its work as a wellspring of God’s love for us, for our community, and for our world.

CMRB - The Survey Says...

The Congregation Ministry Review Board (CMRB) recently surveyed all UCG members and visitors to understand what you think about a variety of issues related to the church. The results will be used to draft the next three year plan for UCG, so it’s important that you know what we learned. During the next five months, the CMRB will share some of the more interesting findings in the newsletter, so please stay tuned. And, if you want to know all the responses, please go to the UCG website www.ucgainesville.org and click on Link to our recent Self Assessment.

Four years ago in our last survey, our congregation said that we wanted to enhance connections between UCG members. So, how did we do?

Most of you (78%) feel satisfied or very satisfied with your level of connection with UCG. Respondents stated that the sense of community (96%), opportunities for social interaction (85%), adult programs (75%), family belonging (74%), friends belonging (64%) and retreat (52%) are important for maintaining their connections. Members enhance their connections to UCG through their peer group (83%), people outside their peer group that they had met at church (70%), people they have served with on a committee, board, or project (66%) and UCG members that they knew from outside the church (66%). Social connections and fellowship ranked 5th out of areas that need attention in the next three year (41%). The groups people would like to enhance their connections with include those with similar interests (76%), people in similar life situations (57%), their own peer group (54%) and people in other peer/age groups (39%).

Sundays in January

REGULAR SUNDAY SCHEDULE

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9:15 - 12:15	Nursery & Toddler Care
9:30 & 11:00	Worship
9:45 - 10:45	United Tribes - after the children's story
10:30	Fellowship Time
10:45 - noon	Children's Activity Time

Worship Theme: Turning Points: Moments When the Concept of Justice Changed

Sunday, January 16 Martin Luther King, Jr. Weekend

8:30 – Sunday morning Meditation in the Chapel, led by Ann Gill

9:30 and 11:00 Worship Services – Martin Luther King, Jr. Weekend - Vince Amlin

11:00 - Friendship Group

Adult Seminars:

Last Child in the Wood with Taylor Stein - What's so fun about nature? People throughout the country are bemoaning the fact that kids are not playing, exploring, and experiencing nature as much as they use to. Do you think this is true, and if so, is it really all that bad? What can we do to pull kids away from the computer and television and back into nature? Come share your ideas on how big this problem might be and strategies to make nature interesting and fun to kids.

Why Work Doesn't Happen at Work: A TED talk by Jason Fried with Erick Smith—Jason Fried has a radical theory of working: that the office isn't a good place to do it. In this 20 minute on-line presentation he lays out the main problems and offers three suggestions to make work work. Join us for a lively discussion after the video.

12:00pm - Youth United & Middle School Group - “The Bully, The Bullied and The Bystander,” with special guest Caroline Chance

Sunday, January 23 -

8:30 – Sunday morning Meditation in the Chapel, led by Mark Burlingame

9:30 and 11:00 Worship Services - Andy Bachmann will preach on the concepts of justice as they evolve from our adolescence to adulthood. Special music will be provided by a small group led by David Evans.

11:00 – Adult Seminars

Deeksha (Oneness) Blessing with Cindy Bergbower and Bonnie Bradley - Enjoy the flowering of heart-centered compassion and love through an energy balancing breathing practice and a hands on transfer of energy which facilitates a movement into higher states of consciousness. The Oneness Blessing assists in quieting the ceaseless chatter of the mind, relaxing the body and bringing us into the peace and joy of the present moment.

Shared Housing: A Model for Sustainability and Friendship - UCG members Doris Harvey and Lesley LeBaron, and UCG visitor Nancy Deren sold their individual houses and bought a house which they enlarged and remodeled using various energy efficient, low toxicity products. They included 3 suites while sharing the main living spaces. They are planting for food and habitat, setting up rainwater catchment, are within walking distance of many amenities and are hoping to stabilize and reduce living expenses going forward. Come hear about this concept of shared housing and the story of three women joining their daily lives.

Sunday, January 30 Winter Congregational Meeting

IHN Hosting begins

8:30- Communion Service- Vince Amlin will lead a 30-minute service of Communion in the chapel, including quiet time for prayer and meditation.

9:30 – One Worship Service - Larry Reimer with Dr. Ken Wald, professor of political science at UF. Dr. Wald will speak on “Confessions of a Recovering Bigot,” a fascinating talk he shared at the UF Silk Road Club's Interfaith Dialog Dinner this past November.

10:35 – Winter Congregational Meeting

No Adult seminars

JANUARY 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				13	14 Parent's Night Out* 5:30pm	15 Lively Arts Party 6:30pm
16 Worship 9:30 & 11:00 Friendship Group 11am YU & MSG 12pm BCM Party 12pm	17 Office Closed Martin Luther King day 3rd Monday Project Night 6pm	18 Alzheimer/ Dementia Support 7pm	19 Church Council 5:30pm	20 October New Members Gathering 7pm Choir Rehearsal 7:15pm	21 Lunch Groups 12pm 20's & 30's Gathering 7pm	22 Ballroom Dancing* 4pm
23 Worship 9:30 & 11:00am	24	25	26 February Newsletter Deadline 12pm	27 Choir Rehearsal 7:15pm	28 Lunch Groups 12pm	29 Ballroom Dancing* 11am
30 IHN Hosting Begins Communion Service 8am Worship - one service at 9:30am Congregational Meeting 10:35am Celebration of Cam Parker following	1	2	3	4	5	6
			IHN Hosting this Week			
		ONA 6pm BAP 7pm	Newsletter Folding 10:30am Council Exec 12pm	BPM 5:30pm BCM 7:15pm Choir Rehearsal 7:15pm		Women's Over- night 12pm
		* Pre-registered Adult Small Group				

Special Thanks

The four of us wish to thank UCG for the wonderful gift baskets delivered to us the week before Christmas. This is part of the work of the Congregation and Ministry Review Board (bet you didn't even know this), and it is a delight to be appreciated in this special way by you. Larry, Sandy, Andy, Vince.

We Need Your Help

This is a gentle reminder that food and beverages are not allowed in the Sanctuary. Please help us keep our carpet and chairs clean and fresh by adhering to this policy. Thanks!

PASSAGES:

- ◆ We hold in our prayers UCG member Bill Lassiter who died at home on Tuesday, December 7. A memorial service was held in the Sanctuary on December 14 led by Sandy Reimer, Larry Reimer, Andy Bachmann and Vince Amlin.
- ◆ Congratulations to Linda Galloway and Jim Ferguson on the birth of their grandson, George Wolfgang Linnenbach born Thursday, December 16 weighing 6lbs 11oz. He joins big sister Lucy.

UNITED CHURCH OF
GAINESVILLE

1624 NW 5th Avenue
Gainesville, FL 32603

Phone: 352-378-3500

Fax: 352-378-0501

E-mail: info@ucgainesville.org

Hours: Monday- Friday

8:30 - 4:30

www.ucgainesville.org

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NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE: WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 26
FOR FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

Looking Ahead:

- ◆ **Wednesday, February 8** - New Member's Orientation at 7:00pm
- ◆ **Saturday, February 19** - Adult Mardi Gras Party at 7:00pm
- ◆ **Sunday, February 20** - New Members join at 9:30 & 11:00am
- ◆ **Wednesday, April 9** - Ash Wednesday services at noon and 7:00pm
- ◆ **Sunday, March 13** - UCG Book Sale
- ◆ **Sunday, April 24** – Easter Services at 8:00, 9:30 and 11:00am
- ◆ **April 29-May 1** – Annual Church Retreat at Lake Yale

NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE: WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 26
FOR FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS